

# OBSESSIONS

**ESPRIT  
ORCHESTRA**

**ALEX PAUK**  
Music Director  
and Conductor

**RUSSELL BRAUN**  
Baritone

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2010**

**8:00 pm Concert**  
**7:15 pm Pre-concert talk**  
Koerner Hall at  
the Royal Conservatory  
in the TELUS Centre for  
Performance and Learning



## ENJOYING TONIGHT'S CONCERT?

Visit our website to join our e-mailing list. Learn more about Esprit's activities both on and off the stage, our upcoming concerts, special events and programs. You'll also receive pre-concert information and background on Esprit's composers and repertoire in the weeks leading up to each concert to enhance your experience.

[WWW.ESPRITORCHESTRA.COM](http://WWW.ESPRITORCHESTRA.COM)

Welcome to the second concert in our 28<sup>th</sup> Season.

The painters Paul Klee, Harold Town, Victor Vasarely, Vincent van Gogh and Claude Monet are associated with museums and galleries around the world, but not commonly "heard" in concert halls. However, tonight the Esprit Orchestra celebrates these outstanding painters in our concert entitled, *Obsessions*.

Through compositions by Gunther Schuller, John Rea, Alexina Louie, and Harry Freedman, Esprit will immerse listeners in

## OBSSESSIONS

orchestral sound exploring the painters' artistic processes. The programme includes musical conceptions of paintings by Klee, van Gogh, Town, Vasarely, and Monet, accompanied by digital photo projections of the artists and their work. In each piece, the composer has created a musical connection to the artist by translating visual elements and artistic processes of the painter or thoughts of the painter into music.

Esprit connects contemporary orchestral music with visual art in a concert experience unlike any other.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alex Pauk". The signature is fluid and personal, with varying line thicknesses and ink saturation.

Alex Pauk, Founding Music Director and Conductor

# ESPRIT ORCHESTRA

Alex Pauk, Music Director & Conductor

## Flute

Douglas Stewart  
Christine Little Ardagh (piccolo)  
Maria Pelletier (piccolo)

## Oboe

Lesley Young  
Jasper Hitchcock (English Horn)  
Hazel Nevin Newton

## Clarinet

Max Christie  
Richard Thomson (Bass Clarinet)  
Gregory James

## Bassoon

Jerry Robinson  
William Cannaway (Contrabassoon)  
Stephen Mosher

## Horn

Gary Pattison  
Diane Doig  
Vincent Barbee  
Linda Bronicheski

## Trumpet

Robert Venables  
Anita McAlister  
Mike Fedyshyn

## Trombone

Robert Ferguson  
David Archer  
Herbert Poole (Bass Trombone)

## Tuba

Scott Irvine

## Piano and Celeste

Stephen Clarke

## Harp

Erica Goodman

## Percussion

Ryan Scott  
Trevor Tureski  
Mark Duggan  
Daniel Morphy  
Adam Campbell

## Violin 1

Corey Germell - Concertmaster  
Parmela Attariwala  
Elizabeth Johnston  
Adele Pierre  
Renee London  
Kenin McKay  
Erica Beston  
Xiao Grabke

## Violin 2

Bethany Bergman  
Marianne Urke  
Michael Sproule  
Alexa Wilks  
Janet Horne  
Jeewon Kim  
Yuxia Wang

## Viola

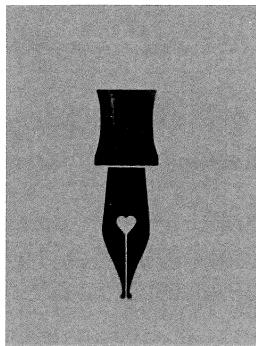
Douglas Perry  
Rhyll Peel  
Kathy Rapoport  
Nicholas Papadakis  
Karen Moffatt  
Gregory Campbell

## Violoncello

Paul Widner  
Marianne Pack  
Olga Laktionova  
Garrett Knecht  
Jill Vitols

## Bass

Tom Hazlitt  
Hans Preuss  
Robert Speer  
Natalie Kemerer



## OBSESSIONS

8 pm concert; 7:15 pm pre-concert talk

### PROGRAMME

Gunther Schuller	<i>Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee</i>	(1959)
	1) Antique Harmonies 2) Abstract Trio 3) Little Blue Devil 4) The Twittering Machine 5) Arab Village 6) An Eerie Moment 7) Pastorale	

John Rea	<i>Hommage à Vasarely</i>	(1980)
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### INTERMISSION

Alexina Louie	<i>Obsessions</i> for baritone & orchestra	(1988)
	1) Monet 2) van Gogh	

Russell Braun, baritone

Harry Freedman	<i>Town</i>	(1991)
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Russell Braun's appearance with the Esprit Orchestra is sponsored by **The Max Clarkson Family Foundation**.

Digital image projections produced by Dania Weinstein.

## Text for Alexina Louie's *Obsessions*

### 1. Monet

**Monet (letter to his gardener)**

Giverny, c. 1900

Sowing: Around 300 pots poppies - 60 Sweet pea - around 60 pots white Agrimony - 30 yellow Agrimony - Blue sage - Blue Waterlilies in beds (greenhouse) - Dahlias - Iris Kaempferi. - From the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup>, lay the dahlias down to root; plant out those with shoots before I get back. - Don't forget the lily bulbs. - should the Japanese paeonies arrive plant them immediately if weather permits, taking care initially to protect buds from the cold, as much as from the heat of the sun. Get down to pruning: rose trees not too long, except for the thorny varieties. In March sow the grass seeds, plant out the little nasturtiums, keep a close eye on the gloxinia, orchids etc., in the greenhouse, as well as the plants under frames. Trim the borders as arranged; put wires in for the clematis and climbing roses as soon as Picard has done the necessary. If the weather's bad, make some straw matting, but lighter than previously. Plant cuttings from the rose trees at the pond around manure in the hen huts. Don't delay work on tarring the planks and plant the *Helianthus latiflorus* in good clumps right away. If anything's missing such as manure, pots etc., ask Madame if possible on a Friday so as to have it on Saturday. In March, force the chrysanthemums along as the buds won't open in damp conditions; and don't forget to put the sulphur sheets back over the greenhouse frames.

Text for Alexina Louie's *Obsessions*

2. van Gogh

**van Gogh (letter to his brother Theo)**

**The Hague c. 1880**

I want you to understand clearly my conception of art... What I want to aim at is confoundedly difficult, and yet I do not think I am too high. I want to do drawings which touch some people... In either figure or landscape I should wish to express, not sentimental melancholy, but serious sorrow... I want to progress so far that people will say of my work, he feels deeply, he feels tenderly – notwithstanding my so-called roughness, perhaps even because of it... what am I in most people's eyes? A nonentity or an eccentric and disagreeable man – somebody who has no position in society and never will have, in short, the lowest of the low. Very well... then I should want my work to show what is in the heart of such an eccentric, of such a nobody. This is my ambition, which is, in spite of everything, founded less on anger than on love.

# ALEX PAUK

Music Director & Conductor



Alex Pauk, composer, conductor, educator, revitalized orchestral life for composers across Canada in 1983 by founding Esprit Orchestra as Canada's only orchestra devoted to new music. Esprit, with a core of 50 top instrumentalists, Canada's best soloists, and an annual subscription series in Toronto, encourages composers to take bold new directions. Through building and sustaining Esprit's high calibre performances, commissioning programme, innovative programming (80% Canadian), recordings, performing arts videos and DVDs, *Toward a Living Art Education Programme*, *Creative Sparks* mentoring and outreach project, tours and International relations, and interdisciplinary arts and media ventures, Pauk has been a leader in developing and promoting Canadian music at home and abroad.

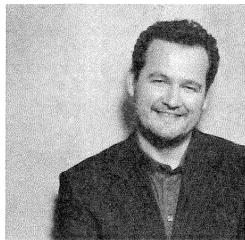
As a conductor he attains excellent performances on stage and in recordings. His innovative programming and commitment to the community through Esprit have garnered SOCAN and Chalmers Awards as well as three Lieutenant Governor's Awards. He was named *Musician of the Year* (1999) by peers at the Toronto Musicians' Association, was a recipient of Canada Council for the Arts Molson Prize (2007) and has helped many composers advance their careers through commissions, high profile performances, recordings and broadcasts. Pauk's commissioning, of Canadian composers of all ages and stylistic trends, is central to his work. Pauk has been a leader in taking new music out of the concert hall and to people in their communities. Under Pauk's direction Esprit was awarded the 2005 Vida Peene Award for excellent standards of performance and innovative programming.

Alex Pauk has a very wide range of experience as a composer with works for every kind of performing ensemble, the theatre as well as dance companies. Revealing this depth of experience, his most notable compositions of recent years include; *Touch Piece*, a multimedia work for full orchestra, 16 channel surround sound with digital sound track, sounds of nature and altered orchestral sound projected from loudspeakers, multi-screen video environment and fabric sculptures with special theatrical lighting; *Farewell to Heaven*, a full length work for the Menaka Thakkar Indian Dance Company; three works involving important Canadian virtuosos: *Concerto for Harp and Orchestra*, *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra* and *Flute Quintet*.

Read more about our Music Director and Conductor at [www.espritorchestra.com](http://www.espritorchestra.com).

# RUSSELL BRAUN

Baritone



Thrilling, manic, glorious, superbly sung and malevolently acted, rich, powerful, elegant, soft-grained, and spine-tingling are but a few of the superlatives the media have used to describe baritone Russell Braun.

In concert, opera and recital, the international stages of the world are his — whether it be the Metropolitan Opera in New York, ROH Covent Garden, l'Opéra de Paris, the State Opera in Vienna, the Lyric Opera in Chicago, the Los Angeles Opera, La Scala in Milan, the Salzburg or the Glyndebourne Festival.

His powerful voice and commanding presence have given vigour to such roles as Billy Budd, Prince Andrei, Figaro, Papageno, Count Almaviva, Don Giovanni, Pelléas, and Eugene Onegin.

The 2010-2011 season begins with Russell on tour to Japan in the ROH Covent Garden production of *Manon*. He also makes two major role debuts, both at the Metropolitan Opera – as Chou En-lai in John Adams's *Nixon in China* and Olivier in Strauss's *Capriccio* which will be broadcast internationally Live on HD. The season also takes him to Rio de Janeiro for his debut performance with the Rio de Janeiro Orchestra and Roberto Minczuk in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and back to La Scala as Mercutio in *Romeo et Juliette*.

Future highlights include returns to the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, the Vancouver Opera and the Canadian Opera Company.

Recent highlights include his highly successful role debuts as The Traveller in Benjamin Britten's *Death in Venice* at the Theatre an der Wien in Vienna and as Lescaut in the ROH Covent Garden production of *Manon*. He appeared with the Chicago, Cleveland, Toronto, and Ottawa symphony orchestras, in duo recital with Michael Schade in Kansas City and travelled Western Canada on an extensive recital tour. He also appeared in a special 2010 Olympics performance of Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and Bramwell Tovey.

Russell's extensive discography includes his highly acclaimed recording of Schubert's *Die Winterreise* with pianist Carolyn Maule and the 2007 JUNO-award-winning recording of Mozart arias with tenor Michael Schade and soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, both on the CBC Records label.

Winner of the 2001 JUNO for *Apollo e Daphne* with Les Violons du Roy (Dorian), Russell has twice recorded *Dido & Aeneas* (Telarc with the Boston Baroque; CBC Records with Taflemusik), the award-winning *Soirée Française* with tenor Michael Schade, *Le Souvenir*, a collection of Canadian songs, *Shattered Night, Shivering Stars* featuring the music of Canadian composer Alexina Louie and *Liebeslieder - Folksongs* with the Aldeburgh Connection. Other releases include *Meditation*, featuring the works of Gerald Finzi (CBC Records) and *Serata Italiana*, a recording of Italian opera arias and duets with tenor Michael Schade (CBC Records), and *Beethoven Lives Upstairs, Mozart and Magic Fantasy*, and *Daydreams and Lullabies* on the Classical Kids Label.

His highly acclaimed Salzburg Festival appearance as Mercutio in *Romeo et Juliette* was released on DVD. He was also featured in *Burnt Toast*, a series of eight 6-minute comic operas composed by Alexina Louie and written by Dan Redican.

[www.russellbraun.com](http://www.russellbraun.com)

# SEVEN STUDIES ON THEMES OF PAUL KLEE

Gunther Schuller

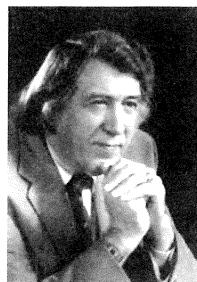
Although he opted for music as his career, Schuller had a youthful passion and talent for art and drew nearly 1,000 pictures. This, his most famous musical work, is one of many representing paintings or photographs in music. Except for the fifth movement, it is entirely in the 12-tone system, being one of the most crowd-pleasing of all works in this technique.

The career of the Swiss artist Paul Klee was the reverse of Schuller's: he was a musically talented boy who chose art. A sense of music is nearly always present in his pictures, which repeat patterns and balance complementary colors in ways that seem related to principals of musical composition. The first, second, and seventh of the paintings Schuller depicts have musical titles. Schuller directly translates the pictorial composition (such as design, shape, and succession of colors) into musical processes. For instance, the 150 little squares in *Antique Harmonies* progress from one predominant color to another as Klee devises the composition of the painting to draw the eye across the picture and thus give it a time dimension; Schuller makes a similar phasing of one tone color to another by gradual steps.

The other four movements are mood portraits of the paintings. The cheeky "Little Blue Devil" comes on-stage with a kind of 12-tone blues harmony in orchestral jazz. The "Twittering Machine" twitters. Its spring runs down, is rewound, and it twitters some more. "Arab Village" is an aerial view. From a distance, flute and drum are heard, then a nasal dance tune in the mixed colors of oboe, harp, and viola. Actual Arab melodies are quoted, the only non-12-tone music in the suite. "An Eerie [Unheimlich] Moment" is tense, with an explosive release, sinking back into silence.

## GUNTHER SCHULLER   Composer

The composer Gunther Schuller is, famously, a man of many musical pursuits. He began his professional life as a horn player in both the jazz and classical worlds, working as readily with Miles Davis and Gil Evans as with Toscanini. He was principal horn of the Cincinnati Symphony from age sixteen and later of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra until 1959.



In the 1950s he began a conducting career focusing largely on contemporary music, and thereafter conducted most of the major orchestras of the world in a wide range of works, including his own. He was central in precipitating a new stylistic marriage between progressive factions of jazz and classical, coining the term "Third Stream" and collaborating in the development of the style with John Lewis, the Modern Jazz Quartet, and others.

An educator of extraordinary influence, he has been on the faculties of the Manhattan School of Music and Yale University; he was, for many years, head of contemporary music activities (succeeding Aaron Copland) as well as a director of the Tanglewood Music Center, and served as President of the New England Conservatory.

Gunther Schuller's orchestral works include some of the classics of the modern repertoire written for the major orchestras of the world. Prominent among these are several masterful examples in the "Concerto for Orchestra" genre, though not all of them take that title. Most recently, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and James Levine premiered *Where the Word Ends* in February 2009. Semyon Bychkov and the WDR Symphony Orchestra brought *Where the Word Ends* to the 2010 Proms in London. An early example is *Spectra* (1958), commissioned by the New York Philharmonic for the orchestra's departing music director Dimitri Mitropoulos. Schuller reconfigured musical space by organizing the ensemble onstage into smaller cham-

ber groups within the larger orchestra, and also concentrated on instrumental timbre as a defining aspect of the piece's form and expression; both of these aspects were cutting-edge for the time, foreshadowing concerns of later composers. *Spectra* remains a compelling orchestral essay alongside such other works as the Concerto for Orchestra No. 1: *Gala Music* (1966), written for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; *Concerto for Orchestra No. 2* (1976) for the National Symphony Orchestra; and *Farbenspiel* (Concerto for Orchestra No. 3) (1985), written for the Berlin Philharmonic. The title of the latter, translatable as "play of colors," echoes the visual metaphor of *Spectra*.

## HOMMAGE À VASARELY

John Rea

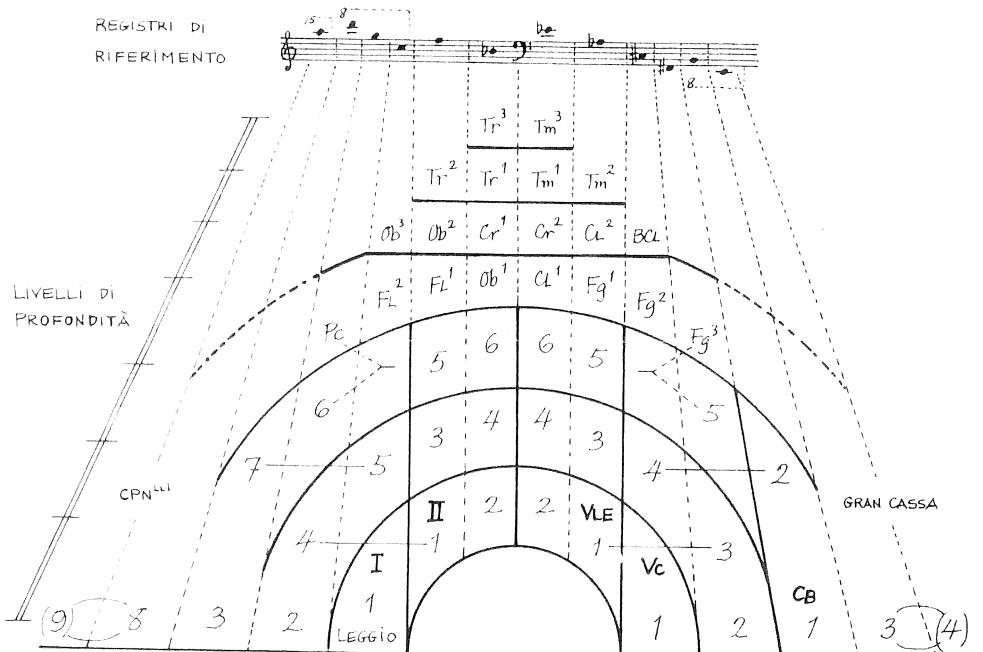
*Hommage à Vasarely* has for its inspiration the lines and networks, grids, superimpositions and transparencies, and optical-kinetic illusions often experienced in the art works of the great 20<sup>th</sup> century painter and designer, Victor Vasarely (1906-1997).

Played without a pause, the work is divided into five sections, each of which explores the sonic possibilities and spatial properties inherent within a somewhat non-standard way of arranging the orchestral instruments on stage.

Rows and columns of instruments are so situated that, moving from left to right (from high to low sounds), one would hear column after column (12 in all) of pitches played in unison (one pitch per column), where each column is separated from the next by the interval of a perfect fifth, thus producing all 12 chromatic tones.

Moving from front to back (from strings to brass), one would hear row after row (8 in all) of the 12-note perfect fifth chord separated from each other by a kind of timbral interval.

**Arrangement of pitch and orchestral space in *Hommage à Vasarely* (sketch by John Rea)**

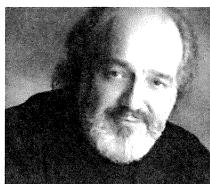


The instruments are distributed in rows (the front four rows curve inwards) in such a way that, moving from the front to the back of the stage, timbre changes but pitch remains the same along the row.

An interesting perceptual phenomenon occurs with the Hommage chord: although every pitch in the chord is separated by the same interval (perfect fifth), a psychoacoustic phenomenon known as the 'equal loudness contour' distorts the perception of this interval. The equal loudness contour, a measure of sound pressure over the frequency spectrum, reveals that the ear is most sensitive to sounds between 1 and 5 KHz (approximately the top 1/3 of the keys of a piano), while less sensitive to pitches outside of this range. Consequently, the intervals at the bottom and the top of the Hommage chord are not perceived as distinctly as those in the middle. This creates a distortion effect not unlike the warped perspectives which Vasarely creates at the edges of some of his paintings, in which the middle of canvas seems to be stretched and the periphery compressed.

## JOHN REA

Composer



John Rea was born in 1944 in Toronto, leads a triple career as composer, teacher, and concert producer. Recipient of many awards, he has been frequently commissioned and has written works in several genres: chamber music, music-theatre, electroacoustic music, and compositions for large ensemble such as orchestra, ballet, choral, and opera. He studied composition at Wayne State University, the University of Toronto and at Princeton University (Ph.D., 1978).

Among his creative projects (with their premieres) over the last few years: *Sacrée Landowska*, music theatre (Montréal, 2001); *Music, according to Aquinas*, for chamber choir—12 voices, two clarinets and cello (Vancouver, 2000); the incidental music for the play *Urfaut—tragédie subjective* (after Goethe and Pessoa) for Théâtre UBU (Montreal/Weimar, 1999); a septet, *Plus que la plus que lente* for the Ex Novo Ensemble (Venice, 1998); a reorchestration for 21 musicians of Alban Berg's opera *Wozzeck*, for the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne (Banff/Montreal, 1995; this new orchestration is published by Universal Edition, Vienna); *Alma & Oskar* (melodrama from beyond the grave), for voice and piano, written for the National Competition for Young Performers of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Ottawa, 1995; the version for two voices and orchestra was premiered in Toronto, 1996); *Zefiro torna*, for the Esprit Orchestra (Toronto, 1994); *Einer nach dem Andern!*, for chamber orchestra (at the Festival de Liège, Belgium, 1994); *Débâcle*, for the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, (Radio-Canada television network program, "Les Beaux Dimanches"; 1993); *Canto di Beatrice*, for two sopranos and two cellos (Italy, 1992); a staged melodrama, *Une Fleur du mal*, for soprano Marie-Danielle Parent, clarinet, cello and percussion (Montreal, 1992); a string quartet, *Objets Perdus*, for the Arditti Quartet (Toronto, 1992); this work earned for John Rea Canada's Governor General Prize (Prix Jules-Léger) in 1992, the second time he has won this prize.

In 1979-80, John Rea lived in Berlin, and later in 1984, he was composer-in-residence at Mannheim; elsewhere in Germany, performances of his music have taken place in Cologne and Stuttgart. His compositions have also been presented in a number of important events around the world.

Besides his activities as a composer, John Rea has taught composition, music theory and music history at McGill University where he was Dean of the Faculty of Music (1986-1991). Rea was also a founding member of the Montreal new music society, Les Événements du Neuf (1978-1989). He also currently serves on the editorial board for the French-language new music journal, Circuit, and is on the artistic/programming committee of the concert organization, Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec (SMCQ).

# OBSESSIONS

Alexina Louie

1. Monet
2. van Gogh

*Programme note by Alexina Louie*

In 1988, Norman Walford, the Chief of Administration and Corporate Secretary for the Art Gallery of Ontario, approached Esprit Orchestra and myself with a plan to celebrate the completion of its Stage III renovation. I decided to write a "real-time Pictures At An Exhibition" complete with celebratory fanfares, promenades and new music written expressly for the new spaces. Audience members were guided up ramps, down hallways and into the new rooms by instrumental variations on the opening brass fanfare (*Spark!*), the theme of which pervaded the audience's *Promenades* as well as all the new music for new spaces, save the *Interludes*.

When devising this evening long composition, I thought that it would be relevant if I could write a piece that would tie many of the arts together. With this in mind, I added the written word to the mix of painting, sculpture, architecture and music.

I was greatly relieved when I finally found Monet's letter. It immediately inspired me to write music that would parallel the rapid-fire nature of Monet's instructions to his gardener and I decided to "paint" a musical picture which would loosely allude to the impressionism of Monet's water lilies. The first aria, *Monet*, is infused with the colour of harp, vibraphone, and marimba. The vocal writing is both agile and insistent. At the end, I imply that Monet becomes lost in his thoughts about his beautiful peonies, roses, irises, orchids and water lilies, musically suggesting that the painter is wandering through these visions as he walks through his garden.

When I found a letter from Vincent to his brother Theo, I knew that I could write a companion aria to *Monet* that would be contrasting in nature. It is a deeply felt and moving artist's credo. Van Gogh's letter inspired this expressive aria which musically moves from ruminative to agitated. At this point he painfully admits that society sees him as "an eccentric and disagreeable man". Here *Van Gogh* reaches its maximum intensity to depict his anguish.

The aria dissolves into the beautiful and fragile sound of string harmonics, harp and percussion as he reveals that, contrary to society's perception, his work is based not on anger but on love.

The larger work from which *Obsessions* is excerpted, *Gallery Fanfares, Arias, and Interludes* was commissioned by the Art Gallery of Ontario with financial support from The Laidlaw Foundation, The Canada Council, and The Ontario Arts Council. The premiere took place on January 27, 1993 and is dedicated to the memory of Norman Walford.

## ALEXINA LOUIE

Composer

One of Canada's most active composers, Alexina Louie has composed for many of the country's leading soloists, chamber ensembles, new music ensembles and orchestras. Many of her works have become part of the standard repertoire.



Alexina's orchestral works have received wonderful performances by such renowned conductors as Sir Andrew Davis, Leonard Slatkin, Alexander Lazarev, Charles Dutoit, Bramwell Tovey, Gunther Herbig, Pinchas Zukerman, Kent Nagano, Peter Oundjian, Carlos Kalmar, James Judd, and Ingo Metzmacher.

Her major theatrical works include *The Scarlet Princess*, a full-length opera with libretto by Tony Award-winning playwright David Henry Hwang (*M. Butterfly*) commissioned by the Canadian

Opera Company and premiered in concert (2002), and *Wolf's Court*, commissioned by The National Ballet of Canada, created with choreographer Matjash Mrozewski and premiered in June 2007 at the Toronto Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts.

In 2008-2009, Alexina Louie was guest composer on two major orchestral tours. The first was a tour of Nunavik with Kent Nagano, musicians from the Montreal Symphony and Inuit throat singers who performed her newly commissioned piece, *Take the Dog Sled*. The second was an extensive tour of Western Canada with Pinchas Zukerman and the National Arts Centre Orchestra who commissioned and performed her composition *Infinite Sky With Birds*. The season also saw the premiere of *Pursuit*, a new concerto for string quartet and orchestra commissioned by The Toronto Symphony for the Tokyo String Quartet.

*The Raven*, a chamber work integrating the Edgar Allen Poe narrative poem into a musical setting for string quartet, harp and narrator was successfully premiered by its commissioners, Luminato Festival of the Arts and The Ottawa Chamber Music Festival in the summer of 2009.

Ms. Louie's current major project is a full-length filmed comic opera based on the life and career of Canada's 18th Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney. Set to premiere nationally on April 16, 2011, it is the first event outside of the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts to be part of Cineplex Theatre's prestigious Live at the Met national screenings. It is by the same creative team of Ms. Louie, librettist Dan Redican, director Larry Weinstein who gave us the delightful comic opera *Burnt Toast*.

In the new year, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra will perform *Fastforward* on January 30 and *O Magnum Mysterium - In Memoriam Glenn Gould* on January 31. The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra will perform *The Eternal Earth* on April 20.

Winner of two Juno Awards, Alexina has three times been awarded the SOCAN Jan V. Matejcek Concert Music Award for being the most frequently performed Canadian classical composer. In March 2002 the National Arts Centre named Louie as a recipient of the NAC Composers Award. She has won the Leger Prize for her work *Nightfall* as well as the Chalmer's National Music Award for *Obsessions*.

An Officer of the Order of Canada, a recipient of the Order of Ontario and a Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal, Alexina Louie received an honorary doctorate from the University of Calgary in 2002 and became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2005.

## TOWN                    Harry Freedman

Harry Freedman's ***Town*** is a tribute to the late Canadian painter, Harold Town. His friendship with Harold Town developed when the two worked together on Christopher Chapman's film *Pyramid of Roses*. Town was the artistic consultant, and Freedman wrote the score. The two men were soon travelling together to social events. Freedman was generally behind the wheel since Town disliked driving, and more often than not, when they arrived at Town's house, the two spent hours pouring over painter's latest work. "Harold loved to show his work to anyone who wanted to see it," Freedman says. "Often he would get an idea in his head and proceed to complete hundreds of sketches or drawings as variations on this single theme."

Town is the seventh of a series of compositions by Freedman, inspired by the paintings of Canadian artists. "There isn't much to say about this piece," Harry Freedman comments. "The piece isn't about anything, other than my own impressions of the life and works of Harold Town. This work, like all music, must stand on its own."

*Town* was commissioned by the Esprit Orchestra with financial assistance from the Ontario Arts Council.

# HARRY FREEDMAN

Composer

Harry Freedman, OC, was born in Poland in 1922 and came to Canada with his family when he was three. His early training was as a visual artist, but during his teens he developed an interest in jazz, which soon grew to include classical music.

At eighteen he made the break and began studying clarinet. After four years in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the war, he came to Toronto to study oboe with Perry Bauman and composition with John Weinzwieg at the Royal Conservatory of Music. The following year, Harry joined the Toronto Symphony Orchestra as its English horn player, a post he held for 24 years until resigning in 1970 to devote his time fully to composing. Apart from brief periods spent with Aaron Copland and Olivier Messiaen (Tanglewood, 1949), and with Ernst Krenek (Toronto, 1953), Harry spent five years formally studying composition with Weinzwieg.

Harry Freedman was one of Canada's most frequently performed composers. His output consisted of 175 compositions, including 3 symphonies, 9 ballets, 2 hour-long stage works, and various works for orchestra, choir, chamber groups, as well as much incidental music for stage, TV and film.

He was a founding member of both the Canadian League of Composers – holding the position of President from 1975 to 1978 -- and of the Guild of Canadian Film Composers. In 1967, the composer was chosen to represent Canada at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Festival of Music of the Americas and Spain in Madrid, where his First Symphony was performed. And, in 1970 he won the Etrog (now called the Genie) for best music in a feature film at the Canadian Film Awards. In 1984, Harry was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada. Freedman was one of a handful of composers in Canada who earn their livelihoods solely from their music. His wide experience in all musical fields enabled him to write in many different idioms, all of which have contributed to, and are recognizable in, his musical style.

The composer-critic Udo Kasemets once wrote about Freedman, "...He has all the makings of becoming a prominent figure on the Canadian scene, especially since he has captured in his music much of the spiritual atmosphere of this country. Yet, while Harry Freedman's music has been identified as being among the canon of Canadian contemporary classical music, if we ask What is 'Canadian' in music? a great part of the answer might be found in Freedman's music and personality. For here is a man whose ethnic origin is neither English nor French, and whose birthplace was outside Canada, yet whose upbringing and education took place here with his 'artistic fights' being fought in the atmosphere of the land of his parents' adoption."

## OUR THANKS

The Esprit Orchestra extends our sincere thanks to the following individuals and organizations providing access to images for use in our concert tonight.

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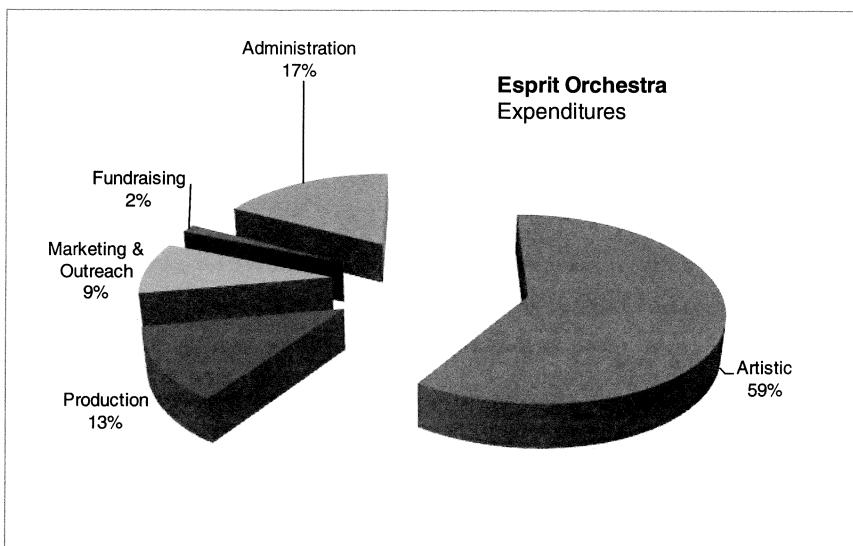
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